



Illinois Department of **Natural Resources**

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Hunters in Illinois Reminded to Sign up for Safety Education Courses

Sign Up Now Before Fall Hunting Seasons Begin

SPRINGFIELD, IL – Hunters are encouraged to sign up this summer for a free Illinois Hunter Safety Education Course coordinated by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), or take one of the web-based hunter safety study course/field day options that are available to earn a hunter safety certificate.

“Summertime is the ideal season to sign up for a hunter safety course to get ready for the busy fall hunting seasons,” said IDNR Director Marc Miller. “Whether you are an experienced hunter, an adult who is planning to hunt for the first time, or a youth hunter excited about heading to the field this fall, hunter safety education can help you enjoy a safe hunt.”

Illinois law requires that anyone born on or after January 1, 1980 must successfully complete a hunter safety education course before an Illinois hunting license can be issued. Illinois offers traditional hunter safety education courses, which are coordinated by the IDNR and taught by volunteer safety instructors. The courses include instruction on hunting regulations, hunter ethics and responsibility, archery, firearms, ammunition, first aid, wildlife identification and conservation. A minimum of 10 hours of instruction is involved.

While Illinois requires that many young and novice hunters take a safety education course, many states now require hunters of all ages to furnish evidence of having completed a hunter education course before issuing a non-resident hunting license.

Illinois hunters also have the option of participating in an online study course provided by either one of two authorized providers to help familiarize themselves with hunting safety information. The IDNR has partnered with Hunter-Ed.com and HunterExam.com to provide the necessary coursework to help complete hunter safety education requirements in Illinois. In addition to the online course work, students selecting the online option

must also attend a one-day field day to finalize their hunter safety certification.

“Getting safety education to hunters is a good way to improve safety in the field, and offering both the traditional lecture-style hunter education course and the online study options give hunters of all ages a chance to take the course that best suits their schedule,” IDNR Safety Education Administrator Jeff Hopkins.

Reviewing the online safety coursework is free to anyone, providing another tool for seasoned hunters to use to refresh their skills or learn about new programs and equipment each year. Anyone interested in reviewing the online coursework can do so through the IDNR website at www.dnr.state.il.us/safety.

Those who complete the hunter safety education course and pass the final exam receive a certificate of competency. More than 17,700 students completed the course in Illinois last year.

The IDNR Safety Education office reports there were 22 hunting-related accidents in Illinois in 2009. Of those accidents, two resulted in fatalities. In one instance, a bow hunter accidentally shot a fellow hunter; in the other case, a hunter died after falling from a tree stand.

“One incident is too many, and we want hunters to be safe while enjoying their outdoor experience in Illinois,” Hopkins added. “Safety education can help that cause.”

For more information on IDNR safety education programs – and a schedule of the traditional, in-person safety education courses, check the web site at <http://dnr.state.il.us/safety> or call toll-free 1-800-832-2599.